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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this document is to help staff of child care referral agencies counsel working parents about care for the school-age child. The first chapter examines the need for school-age child care. The role of the referral service, counseling skills, and steps for conducting parent interviews are discussed in chapter two. Chapter three considers some of the special problems involved in finding school-age child care, such as transportation, care during the summer, early morning care, and child care for kindergarten children. In the final chapter, the issue of child self-care is discussed. Suggestions are made to help counselors prepare to discuss the issue of self-care with parents. Appendixes include information and sample forms to use in locating and adding referrals to an existing referral service, a checklist to help in choosing school-age child care, and a list of publications concerning child care. (PCB)

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COUNSELING PARENTS ABOUT SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE:

The Role of the Referral Agency

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COUNSELING PARENTS ABOUT SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE:
The Role of the Referral Agency

June 1987

Save the Children
Southern States Office
1340 Spring Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

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FOREWORD

Save the Children is an international, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of poor children and their families. It works in 44 foreign countries and the United States, where its programs serve Appalachia, several regions of the South, a number of inner-city communities, Native Americans, and Hispanics in the Southwest.

Because Save the Children works with local communities to define needs and addresses them through cooperative self-help efforts, it is involved in many different activities, including housing, food production, sanitary water and irrigation, preventive health, nutrition, small-scale income-generating activities, and programs serving youth and children. The goal of all of Save the Children's efforts is to help families become able to care for their children.

Throughout Save the Children's programs, child care has been identified as a major need of communities. When good child care is available at an affordable rate, parents can lead productive work lives and contribute to the economic needs of the family. When good child is available children grow socially, emotionally and intellectually; they gain the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Save the Children has been particularly aware that child care is a basic service that must be a part of any community plan because it contributes to the economic well being of the whole community. Good child care not only frees parents to work, but it also creates jobs for people who want to take care of children.

The Southern States Office of Save the Children operates several kinds of child care programs in Georgia, including the Family Day Care Network, a program to improve family day care in a two-county rural area; the Child Care Food Umbrella, a program in a sixty-county area to serve nutritious meals to children in family day care; the Purchase-of-Child-Care Project, a program to help low-income parents in Atlanta pay for child care while they are in job training; and Child Care Solutions, a comprehensive child care resource and referral program serving metropolitan Atlanta.

The information in this publication comes from the experiences of Child Care Solutions in counseling parents looking for child care arrangements for school-age children.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to help staff of child care referral agencies counsel working parents about care for the school-age child. The information presented here comes from Save the Children's resource and referral service, Child Care Solutions (CCS).

CCS is a free resource and referral service available to residents in the eleven-county metropolitan Atlanta area, and was begun in response to the needs of working parents.

CCS helps parents find all forms of child care and for any age child, but it has been particularly concerned about finding good care arrangements for school-age children. From the beginning, it was clear that many parents were interested in exploring different options for care of school-age children, and they had many unique questions about selecting a school-age child care arrangement. In 1984 and 1985, about thirteen percent of all referral requests CCS received were for care of children age 6 and older. But programs for that age group were not systematically listed anywhere in Atlanta. We wanted to compile such a list for the area CCS serves, and to add school-age referrals to our services.

As the CCS staff began to pull together information and talk to youth-serving agencies, it became clear that other agencies and organizations shared our concern and felt that as a community, we needed to address the issue of school-age child care. In 1984, the Southern States Office of Save the Children applied for and received a grant from the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services to initiate the "School-Age Child Care Decisions and Resources Project." As we got into the work of the project, we soon learned that there were simply not enough programs or care arrangements for school-agers, so a major goal was to develop strategies that large, urban communities could use to create new programs for school-age children and to improve established ones.

Another goal was to develop and improve methods that child care resource and referral program staff could use in counseling parents about school-age child care. Although this publication speaks most directly to referral counselors, it is also helpful to community leaders, educators, and social service staff involved in counseling parents about school-age child care services and in resolving the dilemmas parents face in finding and keeping good care arrangements for their school-age children.

CHAPTER ONE

THE NEED FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE REFERRALS

In the United States there are an estimated 15 million children ages six to 14 whose mothers are in the workforce. This is two-thirds (68%) of all mothers of children in this age group. Additionally, there are approximately 1.4 million five-year-olds whose mothers work outside the home. This means that almost half (48%) of mothers of five-year-olds are in the workforce. Studies indicate that the number of school-age children of working parents will increase by about 17 percent by 1990.

As more mothers of school-age children take full-time jobs, and as preschoolers whose mothers are already in the workforce reach school-age, the demand for appropriate child care arrangements grows. Referral services can be of great help to these working parents by identifying care programs for school-agers.

Many women wait until their children start to school before taking full-time jobs, and therefore are looking for child care for the first time when they call a referral service. Others will have recently moved into a new community and may be separated from their extended families and other familiar resources. Many parents are bewildered by the wide array of day care centers and feel anxious about how to choose one that will meet their needs. Some may want a smaller setting for their school-age child, such as a family day care home, but don't know how to locate these hard-to-find providers.

Parents are concerned about making the right choice for their children, but many feel insecure and unsure about how to go about it. Counselors at the referral service will need to be aware of parents' concerns and anxieties about finding satisfactory care arrangements.

While referral services do not recommend one program over another, they do give parents the tools that help them take the responsibility for their child care arrangements. Referral counselors can help parents consider their options, give referrals from which to choose, and educate parents about how to evaluate and monitor a day care plan.

Children in Particular Need of Care

Several groups of school-age children may be in particular need of care. These include children of single parents, children in low-income communities, children with special needs (mental, emotional or physical handicaps), and those who are in self-care (taking care of themselves, alone, while parents are at work). Referral services should be aware of these special groups of children and should identify and develop more care services for them.

Parents' Preferences and Attitudes About School-Age Care

While it is clear that large numbers of school-age children need care while not in school, it is not clear what parents and children want and need. Studies indicate that three-fourths of parents want their child in a supervised after-school program, and that they are ambivalent about their child being in self-care.

Children's preferences for care are less clear. However, research indicates that children prefer to be with their parents, even when they perceive their self-care situation positively. Children in self-care tend to feel lonely or bored, and if in sibling care, complain of excessive fighting. Little is known about what preference children have if given the freedom to choose their own care plan. Referral counselors will need to explore with each parent the particular circumstances of the family and the child's needs and preferences, while being realistic about what programs are available to the family.

Regulation of School-Age Child Care Programs

Day care licensing laws are designed to protect the health and safety of children while they are in care. The laws vary greatly from state to state; some have licensing standards for school-age child care that are clear and achieve their objectives. In other states there is confusion about how to regulate school-age care arrangements. There is often controversy over what should be regulated, by whom it should be regulated, and under what set of standards. Sometimes the stringent regulations designed to protect infants and toddlers are imposed on school-age programs and become barriers to the implementation of programs for older children. When an agency or individual wishing to set up a program for school-agers must meet the same regulations for younger children, they may become discouraged.

Public agencies that have capabilities and facilities to offer school-age child care, such as schools and recreation departments, may be outside the jurisdiction of licensing agencies. Some school-age care programs are not required to be licensed. These included "extended day" programs for children over six in private schools, recreation and cultural programs of youth-serving agencies, and some summer day camps. In some states, programs operating less than four hours a day are exempt and therefore, unless preschool children are also cared for in the program, are not required to be licensed.

Because of the wide variety of organizations and individuals who sponsor school age child care, it is difficult to find them listed in any one place. This makes it difficult for parents to locate programs for school-age children. And it is a challenge for a child care resource and referral services to identify and list the complete range of options that parents need to know about when they seek care for their school-age children.

The Referral Service's Role in Creating Additional Resources

Referral counselors become as frustrated as parents when there are not enough school-age programs to serve the need. Every counselor would like to have a variety of suitable programs to which they could refer parents, but the reality is that there are not enough school-age programs to go around. While some may have good recreational programs and expert supervision, the hours may not be flexible enough to meet parent's needs, or the program may be geographically unsuited to the child and the parents.

Referral services may, as CCS does, create child care resources by seeking out and assisting women to become family day care providers in neighborhoods where very little child care services exist. The referral service can also support and strengthen existing child care programs by training child care providers and offering them technical assistance in operating their services.

The referral service can encourage parents to advocate for school-age programs in their neighborhoods, as well as persuade public and private organizations that are capable of creating programs to do so.

Adding School-Age Care Programs to an Existing Referral Service

Since this publication's intent is to help referral counselors strengthen their skills in counseling parents about school-age care arrangements, we felt that a chapter on how to find school-age programs and add them to the referral service would be intrusive here. Also, many referral agencies have identified school-age programs in the areas they serve, and would not particularly need this information.

For these reasons, we have put this rather extensive information into Appendix A. Referral agencies that are thinking about or planning to add school-age referrals will find it very helpful.

Conclusion

While referral counselors basically use the same interpersonal skills to counsel parents seeking care for school-age children and parents seeking care for infants and toddlers, there are some differences between the two. The differences lie mainly in the challenge to the counselor in finding suitable programs for school-age children— programs that meet the parent's and child's needs in terms of activities, hours of operation, accessibility, and cost. While those considerations are part of any child care arrangement, they have different meanings for school-age children. The school-age child spends the largest part of the day in classes, and needs an appropriate blend of recreation and "free" time after school. Some older school-age children may need some quiet time after school to do homework. School-age children have usually developed some special interests and activities they want to pursue after school — music, art, dancing lessons; baseball or football practice; or

other activities that they attend daily or on certain afternoons of the week. Transportation from school to the program may be difficult to arrange, and a workable solution will need more elaborate timing and planning than for a preschooler in a day care center or day care home.

Referral counselors will need to be creative in helping parents of school-age children choose options that are workable and affordable. We hope the following chapters will help counselors do that.

CHAPTER TWO

THE COUNSELING PROCESS

Role of the Referral Service

Parents are often anxious about finding and choosing a child care arrangement. They fear that they will not be able to find a provider they can trust; they wonder if they can afford the best care. They may not feel adequately prepared to evaluate providers and programs. Young parents choosing care for the first time may be particularly anxious, especially if they are not aware of the options available to them. Or a parent may have had an unsatisfactory arrangement in the past and finds it hard to trust that the next one will be any better.

For these and other reasons, many parents call the referral service with the hope that the counselor will give them recommendations for quality child care. Few referral services, if any, have the philosophy that their role is to evaluate the quality of child care providers enrolled in the referral service and recommend one over another. Rather, most referral services assume that the appropriate role of the counselor is to offer options and to support the parents' choice. We share that view.

The counselor's role is to gather specific and factual information about parents' needs and to help parents clarify values and attitudes about care. In the case of school-age child care, we believe that the counselor should also attempt to include, or encourage the parent to include, the school-age child's opinions and preferences when giving the parent referrals.

If the parent is to make the best choice from the referrals, he or she must know how to evaluate programs. An important role, then, is to educate the parent about how to choose an appropriate arrangement. The counselor should be prepared to discuss guidelines for choosing care. We believe that our role is to dispel the parent's perception that the counselor knows all, and to empower the parent to choose the care that best fits the child's and the family's needs and that "feels right" intuitively. Sometimes the difficulty in this approach is the reality that the parent may have few choices. The counselor must be careful to balance the goal of educating and encouraging the parent to be choosy with the need to be realistic about what the choices are. This avoids setting the parent up for disappointment.

In addition to educating parents about child care choices, the counselor can also encourage parents to advocate through community organization and legislation for better quality child care and more choices for care.

Counseling Skills That Are Useful in Child Care Referral

The counselor has three major goals to accomplish when conducting a parent interview.

The first is to get basic information from the parent about the parent's and the child's needs.

The second is to tell the parent about various options and to explore with the parent possible advantages and disadvantages of different types of care. The counselor should also educate the parent about the process of choosing a child care plan.

The third goal is to elicit the parent's attitude and feelings about different types of care so that the counselor can tailor the search to that particular family's needs.

The discussion of these three issues helps parents sort their needs in order of importance and helps them to decide which kind of care arrangement they want. The counselor may also encourage the parent to include the child in the decision.

These issues are intermingled throughout the interview rather than occurring as three separate parts of the interview. An experienced counselor may, for example, get one piece of information about the child's interests, then explore how the parent feels about that type of program and what it means to the child and the parent. The counselor

may then discuss how to manage transportation to and from the program. Although the counselor gets appropriate information for making realistic referrals, he or she does not rigidly control the discussion. Each interview will be different, yet meet the counselor's need for information.

If the parent is feeling anxious about finding care, the counselor may need to deal with the parent's "burning questions" first so that the parent may then concentrate more fully on exploring options. Parents are more able to discuss issues if the counselor lets them know she understands their feelings and takes them seriously.

Listening Skills

The ability to listen is one of the referral counselor's most important skills. It takes practice and patience to develop good listening skills. The counselor listens not only for information, but also—and equally important—for feelings.

Listening for Feelings

Effective counselors accept what the parent says without making judgmental responses. If parents feel accepted, they will usually continue to express themselves. Counselors can use a wide range of responses that indicate acceptance. There are also responses to avoid—responses that tend to make the parent feel unaccepted or judged.

Many counselors use what is commonly termed "active" listening skills. The counselor's goal in using active listening are to:

1. Communicate acceptance of the parent's feelings.

2. Encourage the parent to continue to identify and express his or her feelings.

3. Give the message that the parent is in control, and from there empower the parent to work out any problems.

It is important for the counselor to make a response that includes naming the feeling. Examples are: "Sounds like you're frustrated at trying to find transportation." Or, "Sounds like you're disappointed with your current after-school arrangement." When the counselor identifies a specific feeling, it affirms the parent's feeling and gives the message that the parent is being listened to intently.

Active listening responses are much more effective than a general response such as "Uh huh," or "I see." Some counselors are hesitant to identify the parent's feelings for fear of being too interpretive. However, the active listening response helps the parent clarify his or her feelings. Rather than becoming defensive, the parent may respond with, "Oh, no. I'm not worried, but I am concerned," and then go on to express feelings about the situation; for example, "There are too many children in the group."

Since most child care counseling takes place on the phone rather than person-to-person, the advantages of eye contact and the opportunity to read body language are lost to the counselor and parent. It is therefore doubly important that the counselor reflect feelings so the parent understands that the counselor is a responsive and sympathetic listener.

Responses to Avoid

Some responses that are well-meaning may actually block communication. Examples of responses to avoid are:

Judgmental Comments or Criticism:

"Do you really think you should leave your seven-year-old home alone?"

"If you'd called sooner, we would have had programs with summer vacancies for your child."

Questions That Put the Parent on the Defensive:

To parent calling for the third or fourth time: "Do you mean to tell me that you've checked out all those referrals?"

"We gave you sixteen referrals. Didn't you like any of them?"

"We've given you about all the referrals we have that meet your needs, but I'll see what I can do."

Personal Comments or Advice in a Patronizing Manner:

"I wouldn't put my six-year-old on a bus by herself."

To parent of an infant: "You can put him in a center, but he'll be sick all winter."

Analyzing Parent's Behavior - Making Predictive Comments:

"You're just going to be disappointed if you expect too much from the program."

"Since you waited so late to call for summer referral, I doubt you'll find anything for your six-year-old."

Minimizing or Discounting Parent's Feelings or Situation:

"It's not that bad. I'm sure you can arrange for transportation if you work at it."

"Well, at least you have choices. In some neighborhoods parents don't have any choices for after-school care."

"You shouldn't expect the referral agency to do everything. You must take some responsibility."

Making Assumptions About Parent's Needs Before Listening Fully:

"Would you like a center?" (Counselor fails to mention other choices.)

Sharing Personal Experiences With the Parent

At times the counselor may feel comfortable sharing personal experience with the parent: "Well, I remember how hard it was when I was looking for after-school care." The counselor must be careful to strike a balance between sharing a little bit of personal experience and implying that the parent should make the same choices. The goal of sharing information is to establish rapport with the parent and communicate that the counselor also has had to cope with difficult decisions about child care and therefore understands. Sometimes a sense of humor helps: "Six-year-olds can really be a challenge!"

Allowing the Parent to Ventilate

A parent may call the referral service with a real need to express intense feelings about a child care situation. For example, a parent may say, "All the referrals for summer camp were full. Now I don't know what I'm going to do." Or, "I'm divorced and I can't find an after-school program that I can afford. If I had child support, this wouldn't be a problem." By active listening and offering responses such as "That sounds pretty frustrating," or "You're under a lot of financial stress. It must be hard," the counselor is letting the parent know he or she is being accepted.

After the parent has had space and time to ventilate, the counselor and parent can move more easily to the factual part of the interview. If the counselor jumps in too quickly with advice or the need to get "facts," the parent will feel discounted and hurried and may be hesitant to share attitudes and feelings about child care options later in the interview. Often parents call more than once, so the initial intake call is a critical time for the counselor to communicate in a way that builds a trusting relationship.

Probing for Information or Feelings

The counselor may wish to probe for information or feelings. It is important to know when to time this and to know whether the parent is open for discussion. If the parent is not interested in discussion, the counselor should back off and respect the parent's desire to avoid discussion. Parents may prefer to have materials on parent education mailed to them instead of pursuing a discussion. One of the issues recently discussed at Child Care Solutions is how to ask, in a nonthreatening manner, whether the parent wants to explore feelings. Staff suggested the following ways:

"Do you have time to discuss this further?"

"How is that arrangement working out for you?"

"You've given this a great deal of thought. Would you like to explore other options for care?"

Counselor Values vs Parent Values: Listening With an Open Mind

The temptation for the counselor to give advice or respond with personal values is a potential pitfall. Both the counselor's and the parent's values and attitudes about child care

are strongly influenced by whatever they experienced in growing up. The counselor must therefore be clear about his or her own values, and then be careful to present options in an objective, non-advisory manner. For example, the parent may ask: "What type or care do you think is best for my child?" Even though the counselor may feel strongly, based on personal experience, that school-age children do best in family day care homes, the response should reaffirm and empower the parent's choice: "That depends on what you and your child feel most comfortable with. There are several options." The counselor then explains the types of care available and gives referrals for the types of situations the parent prefers.

Listening for Information

With practice, counselors learn to listen to the parent, record information, respond with supportive comments, and give information. In most referrals, the counselor will need to ask for more information: "Do you need transportation to and from the program?" "Do you know what route the school bus takes?" Getting comfortable with asking for additional information is important in good child care referral.

INTERVIEW: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

The following is a guide, based on our experience as counselors, for conducting parent interviews. These suggestions are intended to help the counselor respond to most of the issues, questions, and need for information that come up in a parent interview. However, many interviews do not require all the steps, nor will the counselor follow the same order of topics in every case.

It is important that the counselor check with the parent before bringing up a new issue. "Do you need any more information on (whatever was being discussed)?" Sometimes the counselor will need to ask direct questions, particularly if the parent is inexperienced in looking for child care arrangements or has recently moved to a neighborhood and is not yet familiar with it.

Many counselors find an appropriate time at the beginning of the interview to get the name of the child (or children) to establish a more personal atmosphere for the interview. "What kinds of sports does Jonathan like?" sounds warmer than "What kinds of sports does your child (your seven-year-old) like?"

Step 1: Explain the Role of the Referral Service and the Role of the Counselor

First-time callers will be unfamiliar with how the referral service works, so the counselor's first task is to explain briefly what the service does and does not do. After that, the counselor carefully explains the limitations of the referral service in a way that affirms the parent's right and responsibility to choose a child care arrangement that best suits the parent's and the child's needs.

At CCS, we start with a general statement about what our service can do:

> "We are a free child referral service for parents in the Atlanta area. We can give you referrals to family day care providers, day care centers, and to a limited number of in-home providers. We are strictly a referral service; that is, we don't visit the providers or evaluate the quality of care."

The parent may then ask:

> "You mean you don't give recommendations? Why not?"

The counselor then explains what we cannot do, and why:

> "We feel that parents are the best judges of what will work for their child. Parents have their own values and preferences; what might work for one parent might not meet your needs. Also, we don't have the staff to visit and evaluate all the providers and centers listed with us."

The counselor can offer the parent some reassurance by explaining licensing regulations that are meant to control the quality of programs. Counselors will need to be thoroughly familiar with the regulations in the areas covered by their referral service. Written copies of the information should be available to counselors. At CCS, counselors give the following information:

> "Day care centers must be licensed and must meet minimum standards set by state law for child care programs." The counselor may explain staff/child ratios, program requirements, etc. We explain that our licensing standards are minimum standards; they do not guarantee quality. "Family

day care homes should be registered if three or more children are enrolled." (The counselor explains requirements for maximum number of children). "Also, providers who participate in the USDA Child Care Food Program are visited three times a year, so there is some monitoring on those providers.

"We offer training for providers and centers, and can give parents information about whether providers have participated in our training. We can also give parents information about how the providers describe their educational background and experience."

We also explain our complaint policy for family day care providers and day care centers:

"We keep a record of all complaints, and we encourage parents to report complaints to us and to the state licensing agency. If there are three complaints of the same nature against a provider, we remove the provider's name from our files. Complaints of a serious nature are investigated by the state day care licensing agency. If we know that a day care center or home is being investigated by the licensing agency, we do not give referrals for that center or home until the investigation is over and the home or center has been cleared."

Step 2: Affirm Parent's Choice

At this point, it may be useful for the counselor to focus on the parent's feelings (i.e., anxiety), or to affirm personal choice before continuing:

"It sounds like you've given this a lot of thought. It can be difficult to make a decision. We can give you referrals and some guidelines for choosing an arrangement based on what your needs are. While there is probably no perfect situation, we think that when you visit places, your gut-level feelings, or intuitive responses, about a place are just as important as the facts in influencing your decision."

Step 3: Gather Detailed Information on Need for Child Care

Once the counselor has listened to the parent's initial comments, defined the role and parameters of the referral service, and affirmed that the parent will make the choice, the counselor guides the conversation to get specific information from the parent. The counselor will use this information to decide which referrals would most likely meet the parent's needs.

Usually the counselor will refocus the conversation by a comment such as, "Let me get some basic information from you now about your child care needs. Then I'll do a search and we can talk about the different options and how to choose a plan."

The counselor uses the Parent Intake Form to ask for and record information such as:

Name, address and phone number of parent

Location where care is preferred

Name and location of child's school

Parent's work location

Age and sex of child (or children)

Hours and times care is needed

Child's interests

Transportation

Other information called for by the form or needed by the counselor.

Educating Parents About Choices

Some parents will have a clear idea of what type of care they want, while others may be unaware of the different choices. It is often necessary to explain choices before the parent can tell the counselor what type of care she needs.

Counselor: Have you thought about what type of care you want?

Parent: Well, I'm thinking mostly about a day care center.

Counselor: That's certainly one option. There are some other choices you may want to consider.

If the parent indicates interest in other choices, the counselor can then summarize options. A request for school-age care necessitates a particularly long explanation, but it helps parents realize that they have many options and that there are some important differences among the options. CCS counselors describe the following types of care to parents.

Day Care Center: Day care centers serve 18 or more children. Centers can serve both preschool and school-age children, or just school-agers. Most centers offer transportation from the school to the center.

School-Based Care: Some public and private schools operate before- and after-school programs. Some of these are run by the school, some by parent groups, and some by other agencies such as the YMCA or YWCA.

Church-Based Care: Some churches operate programs for school-agers. Some are available daily, while others operate just on school holidays and summer vacation. Still others operate only during summer vacation. Some of the programs include a religious component, while others may be non-sectarian or simply housed in a church but run by a separate sponsoring agency.

Recreational and Community Programs

Many youth-serving agencies offer after-school activities and programs in the community. These may include YMCA, YWCA, Girls Club, Boys Club, the Salvation Army, and county recreation departments. Usually the enrollment and supervision of children in such settings is much less formal than in the other center-based programs.

Some programs offer transportation, but most do not. Often the children are responsible for getting to the program or class and "checking in." If a child does not show up, there may be no system for contacting the parents. The program may operate only a few days a week, or for less hours than care is needed.

Summer Camps: Summer camps may be based at any of the above "center" locations, or they may be in a "summer" location. Camps vary in whether they offer transportation, in age and sex of children served, and in hours. Some may not open during the hours needed by working parents.

Family Day Care Homes: In Georgia, a family day care provider can care for up to six children, other than her own, in her home. Providers with three or more children should be registered with the state Department of Human Resources. Providers may keep mixed ages of children, only preschoolers, or may specialize in schoolagers. Some providers offer transportation to and from school, or may be located on the school bus route or within walking distance from the child's school.

In-Home Care: Some parents prefer to have the provider come to their home. This type of care is usually in short supply and high demand. According to law, in-home providers must be paid at least minimum wage, and their Social Security must be paid. Transportation may be a problem if the caregiver must depend on public transportation.

Self-Care: Self-care (where a child is responsible for himself or herself) is an option that some parents choose. If the parent wants to discuss it as an option, we discuss it with them. We feel that self-care is a sensitive issue because parents may feel guilty or anxious about leaving their child alone but think they have no other choice. For these reasons, we have devoted Chapter Four of this book to counseling on self-care.

Tailoring the Referral to Individual Parent Concerns

Step three is a good time to explore the parent's and child's interests and values, and how they might influence the choice. Parents may be very explicit about what they want. For example, some parents may not want their child in a program with a religious atmosphere; some may value the family day care home because they perceive the home as most closely approximating the child's own home. Some parents may feel that an informal after-school program will help their child toward independence, while others may feel that the same program is not supervised closely enough.

If the parent is interested in discussing how their values might influence the child care choice, the counselor might begin with a statement such as:

> "The kind of care you choose will depend a lot on what you think is important, and also on your child's interests, age, and needs. Are there some particular things you're looking for?"

The counselor makes written notes about parental preferences and narrows the search for appropriate referrals, keeping to the values the parent says are important, for example, size of group, type of program, center versus home setting, etc.

The parent may be concerned about practical matters such as fees, transportation, etc., as well as personal values. The counselor will need to make notes about these considerations and offer referrals which meet parents' expressed needs. When referrals do not meet those needs, the counselor reports that when telling the parent about the program.

The Child's Interests and Values

The counselor should also focus on the child's personality, needs, and interests. The counselor may ask questions such as:

> "What Jenny is like and what she's interested in may influence your choice. What are some of her interests?" (hobbies, sports, or quiet activities).
>
> "Is she more comfortable in a large group or in a small group?"
>
> "Does she have any special needs?" (allergies, medication, etc.).
>
> "Is Jenny shy or outgoing?"

We feel that it is important to encourage the parent to consider the child's age and to match after-school or summer care with the child's developmental needs. Ideally, a good school-age program meets the specific needs of children at each age. (See Appendix B for suggestions on what parents can look for in age-appropriate programming).

Step Four: Summarize the Request for Referral

When the counselor has all the information needed to begin the search for appropriate referrals, it helps to summarize what the parent has said. The counselor might say:

> "You mentioned that Jenny thinks she is too grown up to go to the center; that she wants to be with her friends after school and that she wants to play soccer. Since you prefer recreation programs or family day care near your home, we'll do a search for both. Another option is to see if we can locate a recreational program near the family day care provider's home that might offer sports for a few days a week. You might have to work out transportation, but sometimes parents find that mixing and matching care to meet both the parent's and the child's needs is a good solution. Does that sound like the kind of referral you want?"

Step Five: Offer Referrals

At this point, the counselor makes a search, identifying possible providers to see if they offer the care that is needed. The counselor gives the parent information about providers and programs the counselor thinks are possibilities, paying particular attention to the needs most important to the parent. Example:

> "Mrs. X, a family day care provider in your area, says she has a seven-year-old daughter and a five-year-old son. And she picks up children at the school Jenny attends. She specializes in school-age children, and takes them to the Y for swimming. She limits her enrollment to four children besides her own."

Step Six: Educating Parents About Choosing Child Care

By this time most interviews have gone on as long as the parent wants to talk. However, the counselor can offer to discuss guidelines for making a child care choice. Parents are more likely to request written information on these issues; if not, this is an appropriate time to offer them. Counselors need to be familiar with their referral agency's guidelines on choosing and monitoring an arrangement so that they can discuss them at any point in the conversation if the parent asks for information. Counseling and written materials should offer specific guidelines for assisting the parent in making and monitoring a choice.

CCS has several pieces of literature that helps parents evaluate and then monitor a child care arrangement. We offer to send these to parents, or to discuss them on the phone during the intake interview if the parent requests it. We think it is a good idea to send the materials to the parent, even though the subject may have been discussed in the interview.

CCS counselors encourage the parent to monitor the arrangement. Situations change in programs, and children's needs change. Parents are encouraged to stay in touch with caregivers and their child's feelings about the program to ensure that the program continues to be a good choice. Expressing appreciation when things go well, letting caregivers know about parents' and childrens' suggestions, and maintaining a good relationship with the caregiver are important in keeping everyone satisfied with the arrangement.

Step Seven: Counseling on the Child's Adjustment to the New Program

School-age children are struggling to be independent, yet they still have normal dependency needs that are disrupted when they begin a new school-age care plan. New attachments must be formed with the caregiver and other children in care. The child must adjust to a new routine and a new setting. All of these changes can be upsetting to school-age children, who typically like to think of themselves as very independent and self-assured. The child may feel threatened or vulnerable at having to make a change.

The counselor may acknowledge during the intake interview that some children experience this adjustment period. If the parent indicates a wish to discuss it, the counselor can offer specific suggestions for helping the child make a positive transition.

Step Eight: Concluding the Intake Interview

Once again, the counselor reminds the parent that we do not recommend particular programs. The counselor encourages the parent to call, visit, and check out the programs, and to call the referral service back with any questions the parent has or for more referrals.

Conclusion

Issues and content included in this chapter cover most of the topics that parents of school-age children have discussed with counselors at CCS. No parent would want to discuss them all in one call. It is important, however, that the counselor be familiar with all of the information. Referral services need to make extensive information available in writing to their counselors, and to give counselors time for reading and discussing the material. When new or less experienced counselors are doing parent interviews, a counselor who is familiar with the necessary information and the referral agency's policies should be available to answer questions.

CHAPTER THREE

HELPING PARENTS FIND SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE: SOME UNIQUE PROBLEMS

Requests for school-age care are sometimes difficult to fill. However, the more programs the referral service has found and listed, the more likely it is to find solutions to complex requirements. Sometimes the problem is a lack of appropriate programs in the neighborhood. In other cases the difficulty arises out of the nature of the request itself. For example, a parent may want a creative solution such as an opportunity for the child to go to a program or class on some days, to be supervised part of the time, and to have some freedom in the neighborhood some of the time. Sometimes the problem is the lack of school-age programs in the neighborhood and sometimes it is the lack of transportation to a program.

The child also helps to determine the kind of arrangement that is made. For example, the parent may want the child in a day care center that provides transportation, but the child resists this option because he or she does not want to be with younger children.

We believe it is important to be optimistic and supportive to parents, no matter how difficult the request. We must also be prepared to cope with the times when we have few or no referrals to offer, or when the needs and circumstances of the parents make it difficult to suggest an appropriate referral. The greatest satisfaction for a child care counselor is to help a parent find a good child care arrangement; conversely the greatest frustration is to fail in that endeavor.

It is frustrating to the counselor to realize, while talking to the parent, that there is little likelihood of finding a solution. Because she has tried to find solutions in that neighborhood and already knows there is little hope, the counselor may be tempted to rush through the call and go on to another parent's request where she may be more helpful. Yet in cases where parents are less likely to find what they need, the counseling and support become even more important. We think it is necessary for a referral service to review the kinds of request it receives and identify responses the counselor can give to parents when the request is a very difficult one. Knowing how to be supportive to parents helps counselors feel more secure and less guilty when they have to give parents the bleak news that there are no referrals to offer.

Some of the options suggested here may seem like faint consolations for a lack of child care programs or for a program that is not responsive to a family's needs. Even so, we still encourage our counselors to be creative when faced with requests that are difficult to fill. We hope the following discussions will help other referral services to share their ideas about how to cope when the requests are complex and the solutions are few.

Transportation

Many requests for school-age child care involve a need for transportation. In recent years, many day care centers and programs run by recreation and youth-serving agencies furnish transportation from the school to the program. They may pick up children at one or two schools, or they may pick up at eight or more schools. Information about transportation is available to the referral counselor and often makes it possible for the counselor to suggest an arrangement that the parent would not have thought of as a possibility because the program is far away from the child's school.

Programs that furnish transportation are often the best option a parent has. However, parents should be encouraged to monitor for difficulties that may arise, such as length of transportation time and how it affects the child. For example, will the child be alone on the school grounds between the time school ends and the van or bus arrives? Even if this is not the situation most of the time, it may happen occasionally if the bus or van is delayed along its route. Some routes are lengthy and the children may ride for half an hour or more before they reach the program. Parents need to decide if this is a problem for their child.

Transportation to a summer program may pose similar difficulties. Often a year-round program such as a day care center uses a different location for the school-age summer program. For example, a church program may have a property in a different area of town that they transport the children to for a summer camp program. It is important to be clear about the system of transportation. Where will the child be picked up? Where will the child be transported to? What happens if the transportation breaks down or doesn't arrive on time? Contingency plans need to be explored and alternate solutions found in cases where transportation is involved.

If the parent's choice is family day care, it may be even more difficult to solve the transportation problem. The majority of family day care providers in Atlanta serve infants and toddlers, and even if they are willing to serve school-age children, they are reluctant to put the younger children in a car in order to pick up a school child.

There are, however, family day care providers who are willing to pick up and provide care for school-age children, and counselors need to know if such vacancies exist in the neighborhoods where care is being requested.

In cases where transportation from school to a provider's home is a problem, we have tried to help parents work with the school system to address the problem. Some school systems allow a child to be dropped off at a family day care home if the home is on the normal bus route, while others do not. Some school systems request that family day care providers meet the child at the child's normal drop-off point. Counselors need to know the policies of various schools and work with parents to help schools develop policies that support working parents.

Advocacy to solve transportation problems may be required for handicapped children. In our area, special needs children are often transported to a site other than the nearest elementary school in order to participate in special education or therapeutic programs. The handicapped child may leave earlier in the morning than other children and return home later than most children. Even so, the child may reach home in the afternoon before the parents do, and therefore will need a supervised child care arrangement. Parents may need to negotiate with the school system to leave the child at a day care center or a family day care home.

Creative solutions to transportation needs are required when the parent wants the child to have adult supervision,

such as in a family day care home, but also wants special cultural or sports activities for the child a couple of days each week. If the caregiver does not transport children or cannot leave the house because of responsibilities to other children in care, a separate transportation system to the special activity will need to be found. The counselor can suggest paying a responsible teen-ager to furnish transportation. In some cases, parents in the neighborhood may get together and work out a car pool. Although the working parent may not get off work early enough to take the children to the activities, she may get off in time to pick them up. If this is not possible, perhaps the parent can pay a non-working parent, or trade other services to members of the car pool such as occasionally taking care of their children a few hours at night or on weekends when needed.

Child Care During the Summer

As the close of the school year draws near, referral services receive calls from parents with a number of unique and challenging requests. Some parents have a child in self-care during the school year but do not want their children to spend whole days during summer vacation without adult supervision. Other parents have a child in a program that will not be available in the summer. Some divorced parents who have custody of the child only during the summer need help in finding an appropriate arrangement. Other parents have in mind a really "creative" summer and want to find interesting summer camps or outdoor recreation programs along with the right combination of transportation and full-day adult supervision. Parents with an older child may want the child at home, but hope to find a teen-ager to supervise the child.

Parents who want a full-day arrangement along with an interesting program of planned activities can be referred to day care centers that offer such programs. In addition, a number of church groups, recreation agencies, and youth service agencies offer specialized summer camps. Some of the camp programs operate one or two weeks, while others have a varied program that lasts eight weeks or more.

At CCS, we try to maintain up-to-date information on all of the day camp programs that operate within Metropolitan Atlanta. In referring to these programs, we have found a number of issues the parent should check out. Some camps are not intended to be full-day care arrangements for working parents. They may not open until 8:30 or 9:00 a.m. and may end at 2:00 or 3:00 p.m. The parent is then responsible for finding another arrangement for the balance

of the day. However, sometimes these programs do have an extended day program; if not, perhaps a camp staff member could be hired to serve the extra hours for children of working parents.

Another question is the experience of the camp staff. There may be teen-agers working as "counselors in training." This may not be the kind of adult supervision the parents thought they would get. We encourage parents to check supervision carefully. Questions to ask are Who are the staff? What is their training and experience in supervising school-age children? Parents should decide for themselves what is adequate supervision for their children.

Parents who want to leave the child in the neighborhood with a family day care provider or a teen-ager should be encouraged to think through the special role relationships of the child, the caregiver and the parent. For example, during the school year the child may be content to stay at the family day care home because it is only a few hours after school. However, during the summer, the child may want the freedom to visit a friend, go to the park or to a swimming pool, or to return to his own home.

To make this arrangement operate smoothly and safely, the counselor may encourage the parent to develop a written agreement among the parent, the child and the caregiver that would spell out responsibilities of each party. For example, the child would agree to check in by telephone with the caregiver upon reaching his own home or a friend's house and to adhere to the hours agreed upon to be spent away from the caregiver. The parent might take responsibility for the child's actions when the child is away from the caregiver, and the caregiver would be responsible for seeing that the child gets to scheduled activities (if she provides transportation) and to supervise the child while in her care. Written agreements may carry more weight with the child than verbal agreements, since the child participates in a "grown-up" activity of signing a contract. The caregiver may feel more comfortable with a written agreement because it definitely spells out when and under what circumstances she is responsible for the child.

The Kindergarten-Age Child

Many states are developing a system of full-day public kindergartens. In most states the kindergarten program is optional; parents can choose whether to send their five-year-olds or not. When kindergarten was a half-day program, children tended to be served in programs that were primari-

ly preschool, and staff had expertise in serving this age child. With the move to full-day kindergarten, five-year-olds are often in after-school programs designed for elementary school children, and in some cases the needs of this younger child are not adequately being met.

Some working parents continue to use part-day preschools other than the public kingergarten. Part-day programs may operate two sessions a day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Whichever session a working parent chooses, there is still part of the day when the child needs an additional care arrangement, complete with transportation and assurance that the child gets lunch in one program or the other.

CCS has had some success in helping parents find a family day care provider willing to serve a child who attends a part-day nursery program. Typically the provider charges the same fee as for full-day attendance. Parents sometimes express dismay over the full fee because they pay tuition at the nursery school, and don't feel they should also pay a full fee to the family day care provider. We try to explain it from the provider's point of view; that is, a child attending a half-day takes the space the provider could have used for a full-day attendance, and she needs to earn full-day rates. In fact, earning the full-day rate is frequently the incentive that makes a provider willing to accept a part-day child, especially if she provides pick-up and transportation.

Some working parents choose day care centers for their five-year-olds because they expect to find a center with an educational component that is as good as the part-day nursery school or the public kindergarten. Other parents want a day care center that is not academically oriented because they feel their child needs more opportunity for play and social development before entering a structured learning environment. However, most parents who choose day care centers for their school-age children do so because they have younger children enrolled there and want to keep their children together. Regardless of the parent's reasons for choosing a particular day care center, it has the added advantage of being a full-day child care arrangement.

Some parents call CCS with very definite ideas on what kind of program they want for their kindergarten-age children, while others call seeking help on how to choose a program that is right for their child. As we've said before, we believe parents know what is best for their children and we do not make decisions for them. However, counselors

can help parents understand what kind of program a center is offering kindergarten-age children. In addition, the counselor may point out some of the issues that other parents have discussed, including whether it is better to have the convenience of the day care center or to have the child begin public school early and be in step with other students.

Finding Care for the Older School-Age Child

Sometimes parents call the referral agency expressing frustration over their child's refusal to cooperate with an arrangement that has been made. Many times these are parents who stayed home until the child reached school age, and the child and parent seem to be going through separation anxiety that other families went through when their children were placed in child care as infants or preschoolers. After discussing various options, counselors can suggest that the parent let the child have some choice in the kind of program he or she wants, and perhaps make arrangements to get the child to some activities in which he is interested. The counselor might suggest that the child accompany the parent on visits to check out some different kinds of arrangements.

In other cases the older child is unhappy with an arrangement because it does not fit the child's idea of the kind of program he or she should be in. Older children may resist continuing in the day care center because they no longer want to be in a "baby" program. Sometimes an older child in a family day care home will become bored if the home is primarily geared toward the care and interests of preschool children.

CCS counselors try to help parents understand that as children grow older, they may resist what seems like an easy solution from the parent's perspective. This helps the parent create an arrangement that involves cooperation among the parent, child, and caregiver. Counselor may explain that although it seems like a great inconvenience to end an arrangement that was satisfactory to the parent and make another, perhaps more complex one, it can be a sign of healthy growth on the part of the child. For example, the child may want to develop a special athletic or artistic talent that can only be met by a special program. The child may also be expressing a need to take more responsibility for decisions and use of time than the center or family day care home allows. Also, the child may feel a need for more time alone, to be more independent, or to be free of a group structure.

Some parents call CCS seeking care for children between the ages of 12 and 15. While parents may feel that their children continue to need adult supervision, they also feel that there should be age-appropriate activities, with time for the child to pursue special interests and to be allowed some independence. Unfortunately, there may be few such programs in the community. Most day care centers won't enroll a child older than age 12 because the child would feel out of place and might ultimately become a discipline problem. Agencies such as Boy's Club and Girl's Club are not available in all neighborhoods, and even if they are their programs may not be designed for teen-agers to attend every day. We attempt to help the parent find out what the child's needs are and how they could be met. If there is a program in the area that meets the child's interests, or even a part of them, we refer the parent. If no such program is available, we suggest that the parent find a friend or neighbor who will provide the necessary supervision, and that the parent, child and caregiver talk through and agree on the kinds of activities the child will participate in.

Morning Care

Whether or not parents feel that their child needs care before school depends on the situation. If the parents leave the house a long time before the child leaves for school, they may seek some form of adult supervision for the child. But if the parent leaves the house only shortly before the child, there may be no need for supervision.

Parents tend to reason that the child is less likely to get into mischief in the morning than in the longer period of time in the afternoon. The decision of whether to leave the child unsupervised is also affected by their perception of how safe the neighborhood is, whether the child walks to school or rides a bus, and how close the bus stop is to the house.

In trying to help parents decide whether they need morning care, CCS counselors usually point out the above factors. We also ask about a contingency plan if the child should become engrossed in television, goes to sleep, or for some reason misses the school bus.

Some day care centers offer morning care and include transportation to the school. These programs are usually sought out by parents who have to leave the house long before the time the child needs to leave for school.

Unfortunately, morning care options are not available in all neighborhoods or from all day care centers. CCS counselors encourage parents whose work hours begin at 6 or 7 in the morning to find a neighborhood parent or a friend to watch the child during the morning hours.

Child Care During School Holidays and Teacher Workdays

Each year parents call at Christmas and spring break to ask for child care referrals. Parents who have a school-age child in a program run by a school system or operated by a community agency on school property usually have this problem, as well as parents who are usually home from work by the time the child comes home during the school day. We point out that this situation will occur when we make a referral to a program that is closed during school holidays and teacher workdays, so that the parent can develop a contingency plan. We have also identified a list of social service agencies, including Boy's Club, Girl's Club, YMCA and YWCA, that have "holiday camps" designed to meet this particular need. When possible, we refer parents to these programs.

When Few or No Options Exist

Unfortunatley, there are times when we have to face the fact that no referrals are available. This is an all too common occurrence, and it is a real disappointment for the counselor as well as the parent. CCS works really hard at publicizing the need for more school-age child care and works with groups to start more programs.

When we fail to find a solution to a request, we try to provide emotional support to the parent and try to give practical information that may eventually result in helping the parent with a school-age child care arrangement. Some of the suggestions we make include: Talk to your school principal about the school opening an after-school program. See if other parents are in the same situation in your neighborhood and school district, and get together to resolve the problem. See if your child has a friend whose parent is at home and willing to care for another child after school and during school holidays and teacher workdays. Hang up signs on school bulletin boards soliciting help from other parents. Go to the PTA for help. Talk a friend into becoming a family day care provider. Go to your church neighborhood organization group and solicit support in opening a school-age child care program.

We realize that the parents most in need of child care services are the ones who have the least time to help solve the problem. Being asked to become neighborhood advocates and organizers may seem to them like an added frustration. However, the more people involved in a neighborhood effort, the more likely it is that a few strong advocates will emerge to get things moving.

Conclusion

We hope that the description of our approach to finding creative solutions will be helpful to other counselors and will help them identify supportive responses when the request is difficult to fill. Some of the ideas suggested here are unique to the current supply, or lack of supply, of school-age programs in the area we serve. Resource and referral services in other communities may be able to offer more options to parents.

CHAPTER FOUR

COUNSELING APPROACHES TO THE SELF-CARE ISSUE

The topic of children in self-care, or "latchkey" children, is controversial. First, parents are reluctant to admit that their child is in self-care, which makes it difficult for researchers to identify the number and location of children in self-care. Also, the number of children in self-care is not necessarily an accurate indication of the number needing supervision. Some children in self-care may be judged as in need of care by an adult, while others may be judged by the parent as mature enough to take care of themselves between the time school is out and the parents get home from work. For some children an interim agreement such as a check-in system may be all that is needed.

Second, research findings on the impact of self-care on children are inconsistent. Studies have been made on the issues of cognitive and social adjustment, childrens' fears, effects of restrictions on outdoor play, peer relationships, and risks from accidents. Generally, children in self-care tend to score lower in both academic achievement and in indicators of positive social adjustment such as self-concept and self-reliance. (Long and Long, 1984). However, children in rural settings may show no negative effect in academic achievement or social adjustment.

One study reports that children in self-care tend to be more fearful than those in supervised care. Fears center around intruders, going outside, having an accident, and abuse by a sibling or an adult. Children in urban settings tend to be much more fearful than those in rural or suburban settings (Long and Long).

Another study, in contrast, found no differences in fear levels between children in self-care and those in supervised care (Rodman, 1985). A recent study also indicated that suburban children in self-care were no different from those in supervised care on measures of self-esteem and school adjustment (Leroux, 1985). Children in self-care tend to be severely restricted in their freedom to play outdoors and to socialize with peers, particularly in urban settings.

What causes some children to suffer negative effects from being in self-care? One study (Long and Long, 1984) found that at least three factors contribute to stress: 1) starting self-care before age eight; 2) being in self-care five to six hours a day; and 3) having too much responsibility too early. While a close relationship between the child and the parents tends to counteract the negative effects of self-care, close relationships between siblings did not.

Policies of Referral Service on Self-Care

Resource and referral services may be reluctant to develop policies on counseling parents on the subject because it raises the potentially touchy issue of parent values (i.e., "It's okay for my child to be in self-care") versus agency values (i.e., "The child should receive some type of supervision"). Agency counselors may feel that self-care is an inappropriate choice because of the potentially negative impact on the child's development, but may be unprepared to explore alternative choices with the parent or even to raise the issue in the first place. The parent may feel that there are no other realistic choices, but may be defensive about revealing or discussing the situation.

Recognizing Counselor Values About Self-Care

Parents seldom call the referral service requesting care for a school-age child who is in self-care. Usually the counselor learns of the child when the parent calls for referrals for younger siblings. The parent may make comments such as:

"I have a seven-year-old, but he's been calling me when he gets home."

"My older two are home after school for about an hour, then I get home."

"Do you know of any low-cost after-school care? I really can't afford more than $20.00 a week."

The counselor must decide if he or she will raise the issue of self-care, and if so, how. The dilemmas we have felt at CCS are whether we should raise the issue if the parent is not requesting a referral for school-age care, and how to raise the issue in a supportive way without offending parents or making them feel defensive or guilty. Ultimately, as one counselor expressed it, "We must trust that the parent is trying to do the best for the child."

What are our own values about self-care? We felt it was important to examine our own feelings in order to develop a policy about it. As a staff, we tend to feel that children, at least young school-age children, should have some form of supervision when not in school. The kind of care will depend on the individual child. Some counselors feel that older school-age children should be supervised, but we agree that some mature children in ideal circumstances could handle self-care. We base these values on what we've read of the research on potential negative impact of self-care as well as on our personal parenting values.

We recognize that we have a liability, emotionally if not legally, when we know a child is in self-care and we haven't counseled the parent about potential problems and the child becomes endangered. However, self-care seems to be some parents' choice, and we recognize that they may not want to discuss it with us.

Response to Parents of Children in Self-Care

When the parent mentions the school-age child who is home alone, how can the counselor respond? Whether to raise the issue is a judgment the counselor makes based on the openness of the parent and on the possibility of a productive discussion.

If the issue is raised, we agree that the goal is to help the parent explore the situation and decide what is best for the family. Parents know the needs of their school-age children far better than the counselor does. The counselor is likely to be effective is she raises the issues with a focus on the parent's strengths. (It is important that the counselor be very aware of her tone of voice, especially in asking questions regarding the child in self-care. If it is a phone conversation, all the parent knows of the counselor is a voice on the other end of the line).

The counselor might say:

"Do you have time to talk about this a little more?"

"I can tell you've thought through some of the issues of after-school care. Let's talk about some other things you might want to consider as well."

"It sounds like you've worked something out, but you're not quite satisfied."

Once the parent has indicated a willingness to discuss the arrangement, the counselor can proceed with these three steps:

1. Help the parent explore the situation.

2. Explore other options if the parent is open to them.

3. If self-care is the plan of choice, raise other factors that the parent might consider in order to make the best possible plan.

In assessing the self-care plan with the parent, the counselor can ask questions that will help the parent examine the plan and decide if it is the best option for the family:

"How is it working out for you?" (Explore parent's feelings about other types of care. Try to draw the parent out if finances seem to be a problem. Identify and empathize with the realistic barriers to finding care).

"Would you help me understand how you've set this up? What kinds of agreements do you have with your child?"

"How does your child feel?" (Has she been proud of herself, afraid, etc.?)

If the parent seems open to it, the counselor can discuss other possible options for school-age care, stressing low-cost care if money is a problem, or possible solutions to whatever problems the parent has identified.

Sometimes parents are in a hurry and while they don't have time to discuss self-care on the phone, they may be open to being mailed educational materials on school-age care, or on self-care if that is their choice of care. If the parent has called for referrals for an infant or a preschooler, he or she may be more intent on finding an arrangement for the younger child or children before discussing an arrangement for a child already in self-care.

We have identified some key issues that the counselor may want to raise if the parent is willing to discuss the self-care plan:

What is the child's maturity level? Has he asked to stay home by himself?

How does the child feel about being home alone? (Afraid, nervous, lonely, bored, etc.). The counselor can suggest that the parent ask the child, "Tell me about the times when you were afraid." The child may be reluctant to share his real feelings.

Are there older children (siblings or neighbors) who are responsible and accessible to the child?

Does the child have a check-in system with a parent or a neighbor? Are there other adults who are accessible to the child in the neighborhood?

How safe is the neighborhood?

How close (geographically) is the child to the parent at work?

Are there some recreational school-age programs that offer "intermediate" supervision such as the Y, Girls' Club, neighborhood recreation center? These may be less expensive and more appealing to older children and adolescents.

How would the child handle an emergency? The counselor can suggest that the parent think through potential emergency situations, such as the child losing a key, a fire, the heater not working, an injury, the parent getting home later than usual because of a breakdown in transportation or having to work late.

Conclusion

We hope this discussion helps referral services decide whether to raise the issue of children in self-care. Even if a referral service decides not to pursue the issue directly, counselors will occasionally find themselves in discussions with parents who express concern and ask for the counselor's help and advice about a child in self-care. We hope the suggestions here will help prepare counselors for those occasions. In all referral counseling, we belive in being optimistic that a solution can be found, and we believe that referral counselors can be innovative in their pursuit of solutions.

References for Chapter Four

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APPENDIX A

LOCATING AND ADDING SCHOOL-AGE REFERRALS TO AN EXISTING REFERRAL SERVICE

This material suggests ways to locate school-age referrals and incorporate them into an existing resource and referral service. It assumes that policies and procedures are already in place for staffing, counseling, and handling complaints; and that relationships with child care providers have been established.

Requests for School-Age Care

Nationally, requests for referrals for school-age children range from 12 to 30 percent of all referrals requested. At Child Care Solutions, as elsewhere, requests for school-age referrals increase in late May, June and July, when summer care is needed, and again in August and September when parents are seeking before- and after-school care.

The Provider Data Base

The best time to gather information about school-age care is when a day care center or a family day care provider enrolls in the referral service. CCS keeps information on each provider of child care on a form which is filled out by the provider and kept in a file folder and in the computer in the referral office. (See back of this Appendix for an example of the form).

Special Information From Family Day Care Providers Who Keep School-Age Children

Ages of children served

Hours of care

Ages of provider's own children in the home

Sex of children in the home (While sex of children has not been so important to parents choosing a preschool arrangement, school-age children usually prefer situations in which they are not the only boy or only girl in a household).

Schedule (part-day, full year or only summer vacation, before/after school)

Names of schools providers serve

Transportation plan

Availability of outdoor play area or nearby park

Description of program ("typical day")

Special activities offered (swimming, music, art, etc.)

Children with special needs accepted or not.

Special Information from Day Care Centers and Other Licensed Programs Needed for School-Age Referral

Ages of children served

Hours of care

Schedule of care (part-day, full year, summer care)

Schools served

Transportation plans

Play areas available (pool, gym, playground)

Special features of program

Is the program part of an elementary school

Cost of care

Size of group; child:adult ratios

Description of school-age program

Finding and Listing Family Day Care Providers and Licensed Centers

A good way to find centers and family day care homes is to get a list from the state day care licensing or regulating agency. However, you will need more information before making referrals to such programs.

Day Care Centers

At CCS, we wrote to all the centers on the state's list. About 25 percent responded by filling out our forms and mailing them back. We then telephoned those who did not respond to the mailing and collected information.

Family Day Care Providers

Finding and enrolling family day care providers is somewhat more complex since providers in Georgia are not required to register until they have three children in care. CCS made a decision to try to find and enroll them when they were beginning child care and had fewer children in care.

The most effective way we have found to get family day care providers to enroll in the referral service is to run an ad in neighborhood newspapers. The ad reads: "CHILD CARE SOLUTIONS: Free referral to child care. Call 885-1502 to list your home or center with us. Call 885-1585 for free referrals to child care." The ad runs every two weeks in the classified ad section where child care providers advertise.

When providers call, we answer their initial questions, explain how the referral service works, and how to enroll. We send them a packet with more information on these issues, including information on how day care is regulated in the state, an enrollment form, and information on training offered by CCS. We also include literature (brochures) on the advantages of listing with our referral service. We keep their addresses and phone numbers so we can call them later if we need to.

Another strategy for recruiting family day care providers is a course we offer periodically on "How to Start a Family Day Care Home." We publicize the course through newspaper articles and public service announcements. Providers call us as a result of the publicity, come to the course and enroll with the referral service.

We also write or call providers who advertise in the newspapers, as well as providers who enroll in Save the Children's Child Care Food Program. The state agency that sponsors the Child Care Food Program may furnish you a list of participating providers whom you can invite to enroll in the referral service.

Referring Parents to Family Day Care Homes

When we give parents referrals to family day care homes, we give the parent the provider's name and telephone number, but not the provider's address. However, we select providers who are closest to the parent's home, and give the general location by naming an area or a major intersection near the provider's home. (For example, "Mrs. X is near the Flat Shoals and Glenwood intersection." Or, "Mrs. X serves the Virginia Highlands area").

We give the parent information on how the provider describes her program, background, and experience in child care. We encourage parents to call the provider. If, after a telephone interview, the parent thinks there is a possibility of making a child care arrangement, he or she makes an appointment to visit the provider.

If the parent wishes, we give referrals along the parent's route to work. In the case of school-age children, we will, if the parent is interested, give referrals on providers and programs that serve the child's school.

Family Day Care Enrollment Forms

CCS makes three copies of the enrollment forms from family day care providers and keeps them, by provider number, in two large open files, centrally located so that more than one counselor at a time can use the information. When a counselor needs to update information on a provider form, she has ready access to all copies.

Finding, Listing and Referring Unlicensed Programs

In Georgia, certain programs are not required to be licensed, even though they are a de facto form of after-school care. Some examples are Boy's Club, Girl's Club, and

other recreational facilities that are open only during after-school hours. CCS has found such programs through directories published by United Way, by telephoning city and county recreational departments, checking church bulletins and bulletin boards, watching announcements in neighborhood newspapers, checking out leads parents tell us about, and calling individual schools when other resources run out.

With programs of this kind, we keep information about whether the program assumes supervisory responsibility for the children or whether they may come and go at will. It is our policy to give that information to parents. If the program does not require a license, counselors inform parents that the program is not regulated as centers are.

Another source of after-school care is offered by school systems or by other agencies in school buildings. CCS gives parents information on how these programs are regulated and staffed. Parents need to know if such programs are open on school holidays.

Information on these kinds of programs is kept in a separate section of the central files and labeled "School-Age Only."

Finding and Listing Summer and School Holiday Programs

We enroll summer programs in our referral service by telephoning the same sources we use in finding after-school programs.

We list information parents need about summer and school holiday programs on an enrollment form (see end of this Appendix). CCS counselors feel that the following information is particularly useful:

Ages, sexes served

Opening and closing dates of program, and dates of special activities (i.e., courses, camping).

Location

Transportation offered, location of pick-up points, if any.

Hours of program availability (is there before- and after-program care in cases where the program hours don't match the parent's work schedule?)

Program description

Number of children served

Cost

We organize summer and school holiday program information in two ways: one is a three-ring notebook divided into map coordinates. This system tells us quickly if the parent and the program are too far apart geographically to make a workable child care arrangement. (Many programs are listed under several different map coordinates because they offer transportation to a wide geographic area). The second way we list this information is alphabetically by program title. We keep this in a second three-ring notebook.

Finding and Listing In-Home Providers

The form for in-home providers (people who go to the child's home to give care) gathers basic information about the provider's background, experience, education, fees charged, geographic area in which the in-home provider will work, and availability of the provider's transportation. We request the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of two references. (See back of this Appendix .) The items most important for school-age referrals are:

Willingness to do part-time care

Availability of own transportation or location and access to public transportation

Willingness to transport children

Experience in caring for children.

Information Storage and Retrieval

The Map System

Because CCS serves a large area, geographic distances between parent and program are critical. We use large maps of the metropolitan Atlanta area. On one map we place pins that identify the exact locations of family day care providers. Day care centers are indicated on a separate map.

Pins with blue heads indicate providers who serve infants (children under 12 months); yellow pins indicate providers who serve children older than 12 months.

Each pin has a flag on which the provider number is written. When a parent requests referrals, we are able to determine from the parent's address which providers are near her. This visual system allows us to make immediate referrals in most cases, rather than recording information from the parent, making the search, and calling back or mailing referrals to the parent.

We experimented with calling back later to make referrals but found that the immediate referral is preferred. Both parents and counselors are more satisfied with the method, because the parent gets information when he or she wants it and the counselor gets a sense of completion in handling the referral.

Use of the Computer

CCS uses the computer to store and update information on providers and to compile other statistical information. That includes the current number of providers enrolled with CCS, ages served, vacancies in each age group, number of providers offering school-age care, etc. Counselors use the computer for searches of an exceptional nature, such as for evening care or care with transportation. We can also use it to print mailing labels and lists by zip code or alphabetical order.

We use software developed for child care referral by Work/Family Directions (200 The Riverway, Boston, Mass. 02215).

Since we only have one personal computer available to CCS, we are not able to use it for intake calls and data searches, although the program is capable of doing so. We will need two more personal computers and a way to network them to be able to computerize parent intake and searches for referrals. We encourage all CCS counselors to become familiar with the operation of the computer so they will be able to use it easily when we have enough equipment to put parent data into the computer during the phone interview and allow the computer to do the referral search. We are confident that computerization will increase our effectiveness when we have enough terminals for several counselors to input and access data simultaneously.

Parent Intake Form

We use a standard intake form for all parents calling for referrals. (See back of this Appendix.) Portions of that form that are pertinent to school-age referrals are:

Child's age

Preferred location of care, including major intersection closest to school

Time/hours care is needed (before/after school, summer, school holidays)

Preference of type of care (family day care home, day care center, in-home, etc.)

Special needs of child (handicap, food allergy, medication, etc.)

There is a space on the form for the counselor to make notes about special interests, transportation needs, program preferences, and so on. We use this space to record school-age children's sex and name, and the location of their school.

We file parent intake forms alphabetically by parent's last name so that counselors can easily pull the form if the parent calls back for additional information or referrals.

Plans for Improving the System

At CCS, counselors meet every other week to discuss issues and plan together. At several meetings during the writing of this manual, counselors discussed ways to improve the way we store information on school-age programs. Some of the ideas they suggested are listed here:

1. CCS Files

Develop a special notebook (or several notebooks) similar to our Summer Program book for school-age programs. ("Bananas," a California referral services, has done this successfully.) Include:

A. An alphabetical list of schools, separated by county. Include private schools. Include names, addresses and telephone numbers of contact person at each school.

B. Get a map of schools and school districts from each county school system (if available).

C. Give each school a map coordinate or a code so that the computer can sort by school.

D. In a manual filing system, the same purpose could be accomplished by the following method: Identify the map coordinate for each school. Organize a notebook of schools within each county by map coordinate. File each before- and after-school program and each summer program in the same book by their map coordinates, using a one-page enrollment form similar to the summer program form.

E. Develop a series of transparencies with a map of the city, the school districts outlined, locations of schools, and locations of school-age programs.

F. Complete a separate alphabetical list of private schools and after-school programs that serve each school (as we learn of them), with comments about how transportation is provided to these programs.

2. Summer Program Files

A. Identify a contact person if extended care is offered.

B. Identify locations of pick-up points if transportation is offered.

C. Code each program so that it can be sorted by map.

3. Ideas for the Map System

A. Develop a special school-age book with map transparencies showing locations of schools, school districts, and school-age programs.

B. Use special pin codes to indicate locations of school-age programs on the large day care center map.

C. Use a special pin code for family day care providers who serve school-age children. (This information will be in the provider's file, but putting it on the map immediately tells the counselor which providers in the caller's area care for school-age children. It saves the counselor from pulling files on providers who do not take care of school-agers.)

4. Ideas for the Use of the Computer

We plan to store school-age only programs which do not have to be licensed, and summer programs, in the computer. Since all programs can be listed by map coordinate, we will be able to search for care by location. We plan also to:

A. Code each public and private school by map.

B. Expand computer accessibility by adding a terminal for each counselor.

We look forward to the expanded use of our computer system. We think it will expedite the referral system and give us more exact information on need and supply of child care.

Sample Child Care Resource & Referral Service form for enrolling a family day care provider

CHILD CARE SOLUTIONS FAMILY DAY CARE ENROLLMENT FORM

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Name of cross street or closest major intersection: _____

_____ GA Depart. of Human Resources

Telephone No. (_____) _____ Family Day Care Registration

County: _____ No. _____

If you are enrolled in the Save the Children Family Day Care Food Program, please state your provider number: _____

What is the name of the neighborhood you live in? _____

Name of elementary school in your neighborhood: _____

Name of middle school in your neighborhood: _____

Is there a school bus (elementary or middle) that goes directly by your house, please state the school bus number: _____

What public transportation is within walking distance of your home? (If possible state the name and number of bus routes; ex. "9 Toney Valley" or "10 Ansley Park.")

_____

What age children are you willing to serve? Check all that apply.

Under 12 months _____ One year to 3 years _____ Three to 6 years _____

Above six years _____

Are there children under the age of 13 living in your home? Yes _____ No ____
If yes, state age and sex.

Age ____ Sex ___, Age ___ Sex ___, Age ___ Sex ___, Age ___ Sex ___

Do you currently have vacancies? Yes _____ No _____. If yes, for what ages and for how many? _____
Do you keep a waiting list? Yes ____ No ___

Are you willing to enroll children in advance? (for example, an expectant mother needs child care in three months) Yes ____ No _____

(Continued next page)

FEES

Please state fees for age groups and basis on which you charge (hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)

	Full Day Attendance	Part Day Attendance
Under 12 mos.	$_____ Per ____	$_____ Per ____
1 to 3 years	$_____ Per ____	$_____ Per ____
3 to 6 years.	$_____ Per ____	$_____ Per ____
Above 6 yrs	$_____ Per ____	$_____ Per ____

Do you reduce your fees for any reasons (examples: discount for second child in the same family; when child isn't present because of illness or vacations, etc.)? Yes _____ No ____. If yes, please describe: _____

_____

_____

What days of the week are you open? (Check all that apply) M ___ Tu ___ W ___ Th ___ F ___ Sat ___ Sun ___. What hours are you open? From ___ am to ___ pm

Do you accept children for evening care? Yes ____ No ___.

Do you accept children for overnight care? Yes ____ No ___.

Do you accept children on a drop-in basis? Yes ____ No ___.

Do you accept children on a half-day basis? Yes ____ No ___.

Does your home close for legal holidays or to give your family a vacation?

Yes ____ No ___. If yes, when is the home closed? _____

_____

Is your family day care home located in: Single family dwelling ____, Trailer ____ Apartment ____, Other (please describe) _____

_____

Is the outdoor space located in: Fenced yard _____ Unfenced yard _____

Nearby park or playground _____. Other (please describe) _____

Do you have pets in your home? Yes _____ No ___. If yes, state what kind:

_____

(Continued next page)

Do you offer transportation for children in your care? Yes ____ No ____. If yes, describe (example: to and from your home; to or from a school or kindergarten; field trips; to run personal errands, etc.). _____

_____

_____

_____

If you limit the age of children you are willing to transport, or have other car safety practices, please describe.: _____

_____

Do you have references available if parents request them? Yes _____ No _____.

What arrangements are available for the care of the children when you are ill or cannot provide care? _____

_____

_____

Are parents required to furnish any meals? Yes _____ No ____. If yes, please describe: _____

_____

_____

What meals do you serve the children? (Check all that apply): Breakfast _____

Morning snack _____ Lunch _____ Afternoon snack _____ Dinner ____

Does your family day care home receive reimbursement for meals under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Care Food Program? Yes ___ No __.
If yes, state the name of the organization that sponsors the program: _____

_____

How long have you been caring for children? _____

Do you carry insurance to protect children who may be accidentally injured while in your care? Yes _____ No ___.

Do you carry liability insurance to protect yourself against claims that might arise in connection with the children in your care? Yes _____ No ____.

(Continued next page)

If your were explaining to parents what you do with children in a typical day, what would you tell them? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Does your family day care home offer any special services a parent should know about? (For example, are you willing to care for handicapped children? Will you accept children on special diets? Do you speak a language other than English? Do you offer any special educational experiences for children?) Describe: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Is there anything else you would like a prospective parent to know about your family day care home? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Child Care Solutions
Save the Children, Southern States Office
1340 Spring Street, N.W., Suite 200
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

Sample form for enrolling a day care center in the CCR&R

CHILD CARE SOLUTIONS
Sign-Up Form for Day Care Centers and Group Day Care Homes

Name of Center _____ Telephone # _____

Neighborhood _____

Address _____
(Street)

_____ _____.
(City) (Zip)

County _____

Name of cross street or major intersection near center _____

_____

Name and job title of person in charge _____

_____

Are you licensed as a Group Day Care Home? ____ Day Care Center? _____

Department of Human Resources License Number _____

What age children do you care for? (Check all that apply)

Under 12 months _____ 3 - 6 years _____

1 - 3 years _____ Over 6 years _____

What days of the week are your open? (Check all that apply).

Mon____ Tue___ Wed___ Thu___ Fri___ Sat___ Sun____

From _____AM to _____PM.

Do you accept children for (check all that apply):

Evening Care _____ Half-Day Care _____

Overnight Care ___ Part-Time _____

Drop-In Care _____

(Continued next page)

Do you currently have vacancies? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, how many and for what ages? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are there priorities for enrollment ? (e.g., child is low-income or handicapped; child's parents are members of a sponsoring church or work for a sponsoring employer). Yes _____ No _____.
If yes, please explain: _____

_____

_____

Do you provide transportation? (Check all that apply)

To and from school _____ To and from child's home _____

Field trips _____ Other (explain) _____

_____

Describe the transportation service (e.g., large school bus, 12-15 passenger van, etc.; state which schools you drive to: _____

_____

_____

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND DAILY ROUTINES

If you have a brochure or written curriculum that describes philosophy and daily activities, please submit them. If these are not available, please answer the following:

Describe the program's educational philosophy: _____

_____

_____

_____

(Continued next page)

Describe the daily routine and curriculum for each age group of children: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you provide meals and/or snacks? Yes _____ No _____.
If yes, check all that apply:

Breakfast ____, AM Snack ____, Lunch ____, PM Snack ____, Dinner ____.

Describe any special dietary orientation (e.g., natural foods, vegetarian, etc.):

_____

_____

Is there anything else about your program that you would want parents to know? _____

_____

_____

_____

FACILITY DESCRIPTION

Briefly describe your child care facility: Layout, open plan or self-contained classroom, nap facilities, play structure, special equipment, etc.:

Indoor space: _____

_____

_____

_____

Outdoor space: _____

_____

_____

_____

(Continued Next page)

SPECIAL NEEDS/HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

A. Do you take children who are new to this country and do not speak English?

Yes _____ No _____.

B. Please check appropriate categories which describe your enrollment policy:

Cannot enroll handicapped children _____

Accept on individual basis - no special program _____

Accept as percent or total enrollment (_____%)

Receive special funding to serve handicapped children (Specify funding source): _____

C. Please check all categories of special needs served by your program:

Visual handicapped _____

Hearing impaired _____

Orthopedically handicapped _____

Other health impairment: (epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, etc.)

_____

_____

Emotionally disturbed _____

Speech impaired _____

Mentally retarded _____

Multi-handicapped _____

Learning disabled _____

D. If applicable, please describe your program for children with special needs:

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Continued next page)

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Do you offer any summer day camp or other special summer child care programs?

Yes _____ No _____. If yes, please describe:

Ages served: _____

Program hours: _____AM - _____ PM.

Sessions: _____ Location: _____

Program description: _____

_____

_____

_____

FEES (Note: We request information about your fees, but we do not give information about fees to parents.)

Please state fee for age group and the basis on which you charge (hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly).

	FULL-DAY ATTENDANCE	PART-DAY ATTENDANCE
Under 12 mos.	$_____per_____	$_____per_____
1 - 3 years	$_____per_____	$_____per_____
3 - 6 years	$_____per_____	$_____per_____
Over 6 years	$_____per_____	$_____per_____

Do you reduce your fees for any reason? (e.g., discount for second child in the same family, when the child is not present because of illness or vacation, etc.)

Yes _____ No ____. If yes, describe or attach a copy of fee policies:

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Continued next page)

Do you have a method to help low-income families pay for the cost of child care? (for example, a sliding fee scale, a church or community "scholarship" fund, government funds, etc.) Yes ____ No ____. If yes, describe:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please include any additional brochures, policies for parents, or other materials about the center that will help parents and community service agencies understand your center.

Child Care Solutions
Save the Children, Southern States Office
1340 Spring Street, N.W., Suite 200
Atlanta, Georgia 3039

Sample form for listing summer programs

SUMMER PROGRAM

MAP COORDINATES _____

Name of Sponsoring Organization_____

Telephone No. _____ Contact Person_____

Address_____
Street City Zip County

Cross Street or Nearby Intersection_____

Ages Served_____ Boys_____ Girls_____ Vacancies_____

No. of Sessions_____ Beginning_____ Ending_____

Can children remain enrolled for entire summer?_____ Hours of Program_____

Days Operated?_____

Cost of a Session_____ Deposit?_____ Registration Fee?_____

Is transportation provided to and from home?_____ From a central pick-up point?____

Meals Provided: Breakfast_____ Lunch_____ Snack_____ Dinner_____

Do you accept handicapped children?_____

How many children can you serve at one time? _____ Staff:Child Ratio?_____

Is this a residential program?_____

May children leave premises unsupervised?_____

Are provisions made for children of working parents before and after program?_____

Do you wish to be listed with Child Care Solutions Resource and Referral?_____

Program Offered: Please explain briefly.

Education_____

Arts and Crafts_____

Sports Activities_____

Sports Education_____

Field Trips_____

Other_____

Sample form for enrolling in-home caregivers

APPLICATION FOR IN-HOME CARE REFERRALS

Name_____ Date_____

Address_____
Street City Zip

Telephone No. _____ County_____

Educational Background:_____

_____

_____

Former Employment_____

_____

_____

Experience With Children:_____

_____

_____

References:

1._____

2._____

FEES: We will not quote your individual fees, but we want to tell parents the range of fees our providers, as a group, charge.

$_____ Per HOUR

$_____ Per DAY

$_____ Per WEEK

(Continued next page)

Hours You Are Willing To Work: Circle those which apply.

Live In - Permanent (5 or 6 days a week)

Full Time (40 hours a week or more)
from_____(a.m.) (p.m.) to_____(a.m.) (p.m.)

Part Time
from_____(a.m.) (p.m.) to_____(a.m.) (p.m.)

Night or Overnight:
from_____(a.m) (p.m.) to_____(a.m.) (p.m.)

Live In - Temporary:
No more than _____ days, and

No less than _____ days.

Weekends: Saturday from _____ (a.m.) (p.m.) to_____(a.m.) (p.m.)

Sunday from _____ (a.m.) (p.m.) to_____(a.m.) (p.m.)

Transportation: Check one

_____ Do not have own transportation

_____ Have own transportation

List areas you would travel to for work:_____

_____

_____

_____

Please return to:

Child Care Solutions
C/O Save the Children
1340 Spring Street, N.W.
Suite 200
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

Sample Child Care Resource and Referral Service form for recording information from parents

CHILD CARE SOLUTIONS - PARENT INTAKE

Initials of Counselor _____

Month ___ Year ____ Day of Mnth.___

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

County: _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home: _____ Work _____

Nearest Major Intersection: _____

_____

_____

Route to Work: _____

_____

_____

Prefers Care Near: _____

_____

Employer's Name & Location: _____

_____

When Care Needed: Immediate _____

Starting Date: _____

Home Code (County)

1. Clayton	5. Fulton
2. Cobb	6. Gwinnette
3. DeKalb	7. Other
4. Douglas	8. Not Given

(Form continued next page)

No. of Children Needing Care

1. One	3. Three
2. Two	4. Four +

Child No. 1 _____

Age

1. 0-12 mos.	3. 3-4 yrs 11 mo
2. 1-2 yrs, 11 mo	4. 5-5 yrs 11 mo
	5. 6 yrs. +

Time Needed

1. Full	3. B/AFS
2. Part	4. Summer

Comment on Hours: _____

_____

_____

Days/Nights

1. Days Only
2. Nights Only
3. Both

Child #2 _____
Age _____
Time _____
Day/Eve _____
Day/Wk _____
Pref. _____
Sp. Need _____

Days of Week

1. Weekdays Only
2. Weekends Only
3. Both

Preference

1. Fam. Day Care
2. Center
3. In-Home
4. Other
5. Multiple Optns

Child #3 _____
Age _____
Time _____
Day/Eve _____
Day/Wk _____
Pref. _____
Sp. Need _____

Special Needs

1. No
2. Yes

Reason Needing Care:
1. Employed 3. Looking for Work
2. School/Job 4. Other Training

Employment Code: _____

Employment Code, Spouse: _____

Comments on Preferences, Etc.

_____

_____

_____
(Cont. comments below if needed)

_____

Referral Information: Possible Referrals

_____

_____

_____

Call Back Notes w/Date & Initials:

_____

_____

_____

#'s referred: _____

_____

_____

Subsequent Contacts

Date _____ Nature _____

Referrals: _____

_____
Completed: _____

Date _____ Nature _____

Referrals: _____

_____
Completed: _____

Date _____ Nature _____

Referrals: _____

_____
Completed _____

Complete with initials and date _____

Brochure sent: _____

_____
Comments Continued (if needed)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

CHOOSING SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE: A DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDE

Developmental Needs Of School-Age Child	Relevant Child Care Questions For Parent/Child to Consider	Yes	No
1. COGNITIVE			
Child may have wide interests/ hobbies, science, art, music, sports, computers, reading, coloring, photography, etc.	Is there a wide range of creative activities available? Are they challenging but not too pressured or frustrating?	___	___
	Can the child choose among several activities?	___	___
	Can the child initiate activities?	___	___
Child is developing abstract thinking skills/sense of humor.	Is the caregiver offering stimulation and guidance?	___	___
	Verbal interactions?	___	___
	Games/problem solving situations?	___	___
Child has been in school all day.	Are there chances for un-structured free play/relaxed quiet times?	___	___
	If TV is available, are programs acceptable to parents?	___	___
Homework	Is there supervised homework?	___	___

(Continued next page)

Developmental Needs Of School-Age Child	Relevant Child Care Questions For Parent/Child to Consider	Yes	No
2. SOCIAL			
Identification with peers, especially same age and same sex	Is there opportunity to choose from a wide group of friends?	___	___
	Same age/sex choices?	___	___
Some children may have difficulty in a large group. What is the group size? _____	Are small groups available?	___	___
	Are there low-keyed, understanding staff offering individual attention?	___	___
Preoccupation with "rules" and fairness	Is the caregiver fair/ respectful of children?	___	___
	The rules clear/limits stated positively and consistently?	___	___
	Social skill development encouraged?	___	___
3. PHYSICAL			
	Large Muscle	Yes	No
Developing/mastering physical skills	Is a large play space available?	___	___
	Are there games, sports, dancing, non-competitive physical activities?	___	___
	Does the caregiver initiate/model skills?	___	___
	Small Muscle		
	Are there "small muscle" projects; art, sewing, carpentry, model building?	___	___
Need for food and rest	Are nutritious snacks, rest area provided?	___	___

(Continued next page)

Developmental Needs Of School-Age Child	Relevant Child Care Questions For Parent/Child to Consider	Yes	No
4. EMOTIONAL			
Developing strong sense of self	Does the caregiver seem to have enough time for each child?	___	___
	Is the caregiver affirming/ accepting/flexible/respectful of children individually?	___	___
Needs for independence with guidance	Are children given chances to make decisions?	___	___
	To take responsibilities?	___	___
	Are limits clear and age-appropriate?	___	___
	Do children have choices?	___	___
	Is the caregiver's style of affection and discipline compatible with family's?	___	___
	(Family Day Care) Can attend activities or play with friends in neighborhood after checking in with family?	___	___
Need for quiet/private time	Is there a quiet are for study/activities, etc.?	___	___

PUBLICATIONS OF SAVE THE CHILDREN, SOUTHERN STATES OFFICE

Family Day Care Series

The Child Care Food Program and Family Day Care: A How-To Manual

Family Day Care Training and Publicity: Audiovisual Resources

Family Day Care: An Option for Rural Communities

Establishing a Family Day Care Agency

Family Day Care as a Child Protection Service

School-Age Child Care Series

Counseling Parents About School-Age Child Care: The Role of the Referral Service

School-Age Child Care: A Guide for Working Parents

School-Age Child Care: Strategies for Community Change

Day Care Administration Series

Day Care Personnel Management

The Effective Day Care Director

Recruiting and Enrolling Children: Tips on Setting Priorities and Saving Time

Day Care Financial Management: Considerations in Starting a For-Profit or Not-for-Profit Program

Time Management for Day Care Directors

Legal and Program Issues Related to Child Custody and Late Parents

Evaluating Children's Progress: A Rating Scale for Children in Day Care